

CHILDHOOD

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same generation and sex; the *silah* term, relatives of the same generation but of opposite sex.

From the comments and practices of his elders the child soon discovers that his *silis* is designed to be his companion in experience and adventure, his confidant, his defender against misrepresentation or direct attack. The everyday stream of events steadily contributes to his conception of how two brothers or two sisters should act toward each other. His own mother and her sister sit and sew or go after fruit or mescal plants together. His father and his father's brother often act together in matters of raid or warfare. When the extended family is foraging or camping by itself, the children who are thrown together in play, in story-telling sessions, and in training are necessarily brothers, sisters, and cousins. Because of the sexual division in industry and social life, the child is often left with his *silis* as the available partner for play. The close identification of *silis* persists throughout life. This fact makes reasonable the sororate-levirate institution. If anyone is wronged or murdered, it is likely to be his *silis* who demand retaliation.

Quite different is the *silah* relationship. Everyone is expected to be slightly reserved to all relatives of the opposite sex, whatever their age. Not even the father and his young daughters escape this feeling: "I still kiss my daughter [age six], but I doubt that I will when she is ten, and of course not after she has reached the age of puberty." This restraint becomes heightened between relatives of opposite sex of the same generation.

Brother and sister are so carefully trained to be reserved when they are together that any inclinations to exhibit overt sexual interest in each other are almost certain to be repressed. There is the possibility, however, that young men and women more distantly related will meet and become intimate. The term *silah* stands as a barrier against this, for a female cousin is terminologically classified by a young man with his sister and is just as forbidden to him. Very often the precise relationship is difficult to trace, but, if the young man knows that either of his parents addressed one of the girl's parents as *silis* or *silah*, his attentions to that girl are illicit.

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1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

754 250 One characteristic often attributed to the sorcerer is sexual
157 aberrance. The stories of naked individuals displaying them-
834 selves come to mind in this connection. In the mythology, when
[839] Coyote is accused rightfully of having had intercourse with his
[602] mother-in-law, his rejoinder is, "That's witch talk." It will be
remembered that one who neglects to hide from his avoidance
relatives, or who is too familiar with the mate of a sibling or a
cousin, runs the risk of being named a witch. Nor was it an ac-
cident that the tempters who offered a sorcerer's tongue were
unclothed.

754 Incest is promptly equated with witchcraft. Of a person ac-
835 cused of marrying a close relative, an informant said, "In my
opinion he must be a witch, and the tribe accuses him of that be-
cause he married a close relative. People are afraid of him."
Another commentator declared: "In cases of incest, people say,
'They must be witches to do a thing like that.' I have heard sev-
eral people who are accused of incest referred to as witches.
They say, 'Even some witches wouldn't do that.'"

754 Public exposure and beatings are the mildest punishments
684 meted out to those discovered in incest. Just as often the ex-
treme penalty is demanded.

If two persons committed incest and were found out, a crowd would gather,
and any headman would say, "I know those two had intercourse together; get
them!" Everyone considered them witches, and they were burned. Incest some-
times goes before a council of people and sometimes the parents kill them out-
right. Usually the parents handle them.

[586] If they are distant relatives and did not know they were related and find it
out after they marry, they go apart. That has happened often, I have heard.
But if they know it and everybody knows they are relatives and they marry any-
way, in the old days they would kill both of them as witches. That's what N.
used to tell us happened before there were white men and law.

539 A "love-death" story is told of a man who could not face the
835 wrath of his relatives after misconduct with his sister:

762 In the old days there were a brother and sister, children of the same parents,
who had been lying together. The people were suspicious of them for a long
time. The young man thought that the old people knew about them, although
they really did not. He knew that if they were caught, a terrible punishment
would come, so he took this way out.

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He cut a stick about nine inches long and began to whittle on it. He sharpened it at both ends. Suspecting that they were caught, the couple stole off and they lay together again, but the girl didn't see the stick that the boy had made. When they lay down, the boy put the stick at her belly, and when he pushed down, the stick went through her. Because it was sharpened at both ends, it went through him too, and they both died.

The people missed them, searched for them, and found them dead. In this case the parents were good and not witches, and that is why the boy killed his sister and himself.

In these days the charge of witchcraft is still made in cases of incest but not with as much effectiveness as formerly:

R. married C's daughter. C. and this boy's father were full brothers. C. didn't like it. He went to the boy. He told him, "Your father was my full brother. Why do you want to marry my daughter? People will call you a witch." He went to the agent about it, but he finally gave in. That's why there is so much trouble here now, they say. It's because things like this go on. The young people now are like dogs, like billy goats.

By the equation of incest with witchcraft, the gravest crime in the religious sphere and the most abhorrent act in the social realm have been combined. The charge of witchcraft acts as the dragnet which combs the society for the flagrant aberrant.

Punishment of witches.—From the attitude toward those judged guilty of incest, the stern treatment of witches may be anticipated:

Sometimes personal revenge is taken on the witch. Every once in a while a witch is killed by the one he has been working against or by a dead man's relatives who find him out. Often they are shot. No one knows for sure who does it. . . . The last case I know of happened twenty years ago. A man and his wife were shot as they came on horseback out of the canyon from the feast grounds where they had been working witchcraft.

"The data presented indicate the strong reactions of the majority of informants to incest and their equation of it with witchcraft. Some informants took a milder stand, however. Said one: 'For incest between distant relatives, the punishment would not be so severe. A person might be whipped until he couldn't stand, but that's all. There is talk and disapproval, but after the pair are punished, the thing is forgiven and forgotten.' Said another: 'Not so much is thought about it if they are very distant relatives. They are whipped and insulted. This would not spoil their chance of marriage later on. A person who is pretty hard up is bound to get married sooner or later.'"

121 plasticity of supernatural power, namely, that power may be
754 used for good or evil depending on the character and design of
128 the shaman. Moreover, they suggest that, according to the
Chiricahua view, evil may arise either from the malevolence of
man or from the advantages which evil power offers man if he
will agree to be the instrument of the forces of malice. But it is
plain throughout that sorcery can operate only through man and
that consequently evil cannot flourish as long as humankind re-
sists it courageously.

[178] The last episode is included, despite its modern elements, be-
cause it is a good example of what takes place when new sym-
bols are substituted for old without a change in the basic
thought and attitude pattern.

754 1. *The Power of Sorcery Is Offered to a Chiricahua*

787 A friend told me he had a chance to be a witch. This was at
539 Fort Sill, Oklahoma.¹ He was sleeping in his house alone at
night. There was a window right by him. It was dark. He
heard somebody get in and walk around every night. He'd look
up carefully, but he'd hear the window and door rattle and some-
one get in.

This thing appeared to him inside the house one night. An
old woman and an old man came in naked and stood by his bed.²
They were no persons he knew, just spirits. He was talking to
them. While they were talking, a young boy and girl came in
entirely naked and stood before him. And they told him, "We
came over here to give you power to be a witch."

He says he talked to them. He said, "How am I going to be
a witch?"

He told me later, "My friend, it's no wonder that when you
suspect a witch you can't find out about him. It's right in here
in the middle of the tongue. They told me to stick my tongue

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¹ This story dates back to the time when the Chiricahua were held as
prisoners of war at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, after being removed from their
territory in the Southwest.

² Shamelessness, nakedness, and incest are associated with sorcery on the
grounds that only witches would be guilty of such excesses.